



County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

August 31, 2007

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TO: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
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FROM: William T Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

RESPONSE TO MAY 8, 2007 BOARD DIRECTION ON THE CHILDREN PLANNING COUNCIL'S REPORT "YOUTH IN THE LOS ANGELES JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM: CURRENT CONDITIONS AND POSSIBLE DIRECTIONS FOR CHANGE"

On May 8, 2007, the Children's Planning Council (CPC) presented its report related to the findings from a study on the current conditions in the County's juvenile justice system, directions for change, and next steps in developing community-based supports for youth, families and communities. During the ensuing discussion, a Board Motion was adopted, which included the following direction to the Chief Executive Officer (previously the Chief Administrative Officer):

- The Chief Administrative Officer, in consultation with the Chief Probation Officer and other appropriate County departments, review the Children's Planning Council's 2006 report on juvenile justice and determine if the baseline data and recommendations spelled out in the report would be sufficient basis for a substantive, action-driven planning effort to reform the juvenile justice system, determine if and how a consultant would be useful in enacting the recommended reforms, and report back to the Board within 30 days.

On June 16, 2007, the Chief Executive Office (CEO) submitted a status report to your Board, and indicated our intent to return with a follow-up report on August 31, 2007. This report is in keeping with the stated intent.

Review of CPC's 2006 Report

Staff from the CEO and Probation departments have reviewed the CPC's 2006 report and CPC recommendations (issued subsequent to the May 8, 2007 motion), and have concluded there is sufficient basis for the formation of an action-driven planning effort to reform the juvenile justice system. This conclusion is based upon our discussion with the CPC on the intent of the recommendations; the experience of our staff in the field; and our own observations in the areas addressed in the study. In most instances, we concur with the recommendations presented by CPC. In those instances where our opinion differs, a justification is provided in support of our position. CPC's recommendations and our responses are provided in Attachment I.

During the review process, it was brought to our attention that some key stakeholders had not been provided the opportunity for input into the findings and recommendations put forth by CPC. To avoid a repeat of this oversight, my staff will work with Probation and the CPC in an effort to ensure that future recommendations and solutions are inclusive of key stakeholders and address their concerns, to the fullest extent possible.

A need for consultants

As we proceed with our efforts to transform the delivery of probation services and thus, juvenile justice reform, we will assess how a consultant would be useful in our efforts to increase and improve mental health, health and education services, community capacity, and to formally launch and sustain our planning effort to transform our juvenile justice system. However, it is too early in the process to reach a conclusion at this time.

If you have any questions about the information contained in this report, or need additional information, you may contact Deputy Chief Executive Officer Doyle Campbell, Public Safety, at (213) 893-2374.

WTF:SRH:RDC
RBT:JW:GS yjf

Attachment

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Chief Probation Officer
Children's Planning Council

CPC Report.bm

RESPONSE TO CHILDREN'S PLANNING COUNCIL'S JUVENILE JUSTICE DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **CPC Recommendation:** Establish charter schools and other innovative education programs and policies in juvenile halls and camps to expand educational options for youth. Pilot test different approaches and compare results achieved by different providers using a variety of instructional methods and philosophies. Use this opportunity to establish education as the basis and underlying focus for all programming and interaction with youth, particularly in the camps.

Concur with recommendation.

Improving educational programs is one of the areas of most need in our juvenile justice system. The Probation Department is developing a plan to pilot a charter school at female camps, Scott and Scudder, which will focus on aligning effective and innovative educational opportunities to include rigorous curriculum, tailored to the individual needs of youth. Additionally, Probation is working with key stakeholders group to address Supervisor Knabe's motion of June 19, 2007 regarding developing a comprehensive plan to dramatically reform education programs in the County's juvenile halls and camps. The group has had significant discussion of the existing problems and the need to identify effective alternatives to the current delivery of education services to the minors in Probation camps and halls. Overall, there is a consensus regarding the need for systemic education reform, while recognizing the need for continued improvement or investment in other key areas, i.e. prevention and mental health services. However, the group's primary focus will be education reform.

2. **CPC Recommendation:** Direct the Probation Department to ensure that the initial assessment for youth entering juvenile halls and camps is comprehensive, addressing all of the bio-psycho-social areas known to cause problems for these youth, and that youth are re-assessed at regular intervals. Special assessment protocols may be needed to assure effective intervention for youth in different parts of the system – those in halls and camps, at home on probation, or in suitable placement.

Concur with recommendation.

Currently, Probation is assessing minors using the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument in the juvenile halls and the Los Angeles Risk and Resiliency Checkup in the field and in the camps. The Camp Assessment Unit works with the Department of Mental Health (DMH), Los Angeles County Office of Education, and the Department of Health Services' Juvenile Court Health Services in Multi-Dimensional Teams (MDT) on minors waiting to go to camp. This last assessment determines which camp program the minor should be transferred to. In addition, in collaboration with DMH, Probation recently initiated a Neurobehavioral Screening Program to identify, characterize, and treat mentally ill juvenile offenders with neurobehavioral disorders caused by fetal alcoholism syndrome, traumatic brain injury, and severe substance abuse. A study of existing and potential assessment processes for "what works" would be beneficial.

3. **CPC Recommendation:** Separate the juvenile functions of the Probation Department and ask the CEO, as a first step, to include juvenile justice in the Children and Families' Well-Being Cluster, keeping adult probation in the Public Safety Cluster.

Do not concur with recommendation.

It would be detrimental to the Department to separate the juvenile and adult functions. The Department would lose a wealth of expertise as many employees have acquired knowledge and experience with juvenile and adult operations and information systems that address similar needs in both age groups. Staff would no longer have the ability to move from an adult function to juvenile function, and vice-versa, to gain additional knowledge and expertise which has afforded the Department fiscal, operational, and organizational effectiveness. Further, separation of the juvenile and adult services under different organizations may hamper the Department's ability to establish a continuum of care that is need-driven rather than arbitrarily age-driven.

Additionally, staff from the Children and Families' Well-Being Cluster will be involved in issues related to juvenile functions of the Probation to facilitate collaboration with the health and human services departments.

4. **CPC Recommendation:** Actively engage youth, families and community stakeholders in community action research to identify problems, test new programs and track effectiveness.

Concur with recommendation.

Increasing stakeholders' engagement in community action research will be the key to the effectiveness of building community capacity. More Community-Based Organizations (CBO) activity is needed particularly in underserved geographical areas. In response to a Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) parent survey, Probation has implemented parent engagement workshops across JJCPA school clusters. These workshops provide feedback to Deputy Probation Officers (DPO) and school officials on issues of importance to parents. The workshops also seek to empower parents to take a greater role and responsibility in the lives of their children. However, in-lieu of creating additional councils as referenced in the report, a review of existing councils' structures with as-needed modifications, would seem to be more efficient – to the extent possible, the focus should be on building community capacity including acquiring a fundamental understanding and embracing of evidence-based practices that reduce offender recidivism and increase public safety.

5. **CPC Recommendation:** Ask the CEO to analyze use of JJCPA and other funds in supporting effective community-based prevention and intervention services. Probation and other County departments should support sustained partnerships with community-based organizations that successfully serve high need communities, leading to development of effective community-based alternatives for youth and families.

Concur with recommendation.

Since the inception of the implementation of JJCPA-funded programs in 2000, JJCPA has been supporting prevention and early intervention, family support, education and community-based services for at-risk youth and those already involved with the juvenile justice system. Consistent with AB 1913 which established the JJCPA, the County has allocated funding to communities of high crime and high need, and is providing a continuum of prevention, intervention and enforcement programs and strategies. Further, Probation has placed an emphasis on strengthening their service delivery model through increased collaboration, and enhanced case management interventions and training with CBOs and other County and City departments. Currently, 30 percent of JJCPA funds are allocated to CBOs. Prior to increasing funds to CBOs, it is imperative to focus on community capacity and effectiveness, and that we continue to work to ensure that CBOs have the necessary capacity, expertise, accountability, and business acumen.

6. **CPC Recommendation:** Direct the Department of Children and Family Services and the Probation Department to report back to the Board on the progress of the WIC 241.1 Dual Status Protocol pilot project in Pasadena and implement successful practices in other courts.

Concur with recommendation.

Passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 129 permitted the Probation Department and the Department of Children and Family Services, in consultation with the Presiding Judge, Juvenile Court, to create a jointly-written protocol to allow the Departments to jointly assess and recommend that a youth be designated as dual status. Development of this protocol was accomplished under the leadership of Judge Michael Nash through a countywide, multi-agency collaborative, resulting in the implementation of a pilot on May 15, 2007 at the Pasadena Delinquency Courts. The revised WIC 241.1 pilot protocol includes a more comprehensive, cross systems assessment developed by a multi-disciplinary team, individualized case plans with services and targeted treatment interventions, implementation oversight/monitoring, development/tracking of cross-system outcomes, and a formalized evaluation process. Based on the implementation of the comprehensive pilot protocol, coupled with previous WIC 241.1 experience, this pilot project should provide important evaluation information and recommendations regarding possible future countywide implementation, and is contingent on the availability of additional resources. However, with only one month in operation, it would be too soon to have sufficient data to enable a reliable program evaluation and provide a meaningful progress report at this time. We recommend having six to nine months of experience.

7. **CPC Recommendation:** Draft and adopt standards of legal representation for youth in the juvenile justice system.

After CPC submitted its recommendations to the Board, the Juvenile Indigent Defense Panel Attorneys and the District Attorney wrote letters, expressing their concerns that as key stakeholders they were not provided an opportunity for input in to the development of recommendations. Subsequently, the CPC met with the Juvenile Indigent Defense Panel Attorney to listen to their concerns. We propose that the CPC

also meet with the District Attorney's Office as well, in order to understand the concerns of all sides.

8. **CPC Recommendation:** Launch a comprehensive action-oriented planning and implementation effort to transform LA's juvenile justice system. The BOS should provide a vision for change that addresses the balance between community-based prevention/intervention and law enforcement strategies, and ask the CEO to develop guidelines for a longer-term process to engage all of the necessary stakeholders.

Concur with recommendation.

Probation took the initial steps toward implementing this recommendation last fall with our Community Corrections Collaborative Conference. With Probation's current effort on the Title IV-E Waiver Capped Demonstration Project, JJCPA, the County's Prevention Initiative, and joint Los Angeles City and County gang reduction, planning will be fruitful and lay the ground work and infrastructure to achieve this recommendation. However, significant planning, coordination and implementation efforts will be needed to bring this recommendation to scale and will require the involvement of juvenile justice experts and the Courts.

9. **CPC Recommendation:** Create a state-of-the-art Research, Evaluation and Policy Institute to support improvements in the juvenile justice system, focusing on community-based prevention and early intervention as well as law enforcement, suppression and intervention strategies. If effective, the purview of the Institute should be expanded to address other areas related to child, family and community well-being.

Concur with concept.

This is a good concept and will require significant planning and resources, and collaboration between universities, public policy institutes and other government entities for the implementation of this recommendation.

10. **CPC Recommendation:** Standardize performance-based contracting procedures and streamline grant processes across departments.

Concur with recommendation.

This recommendation is consistent with action being taken by the Probation pursuant to Thompson, Cobb, Bazilio & Associates' (TCBA) management audit recommendation to include, to the extent possible, performance-based provisions in service contracts. Therefore, Probation is currently pursuing standardized contracts and measured outcomes. This effort will increase as the Department moves forward with Evidence Base Practices.

11. **CPC Recommendation:** Cross train staff from County departments and community-based organizations – add parents and youth to the mix whenever possible.

Concur with recommendation.

We supports the cross training of staff and CBO representatives and increased parental and youth involvement to enhance offenders' success rate opportunities. Over the past four years, Probation have trained our JJCPA community-based service providers, participant county agencies and DPOs in the uses of our juvenile assessment tool, the Los Angeles Risk & Resiliency Check-Up, Social Learning Curriculum, adolescent stages of development, Motivational Interviewing, and strength-based case management. Later this year, Probation will be providing Prosocial Skills Aggression Replacement Training. County's Title IV-E Capped Allocation Demonstration Project Plan calls for cross-training with DMH, DCFS, LACOE, group homes and community-based providers. Thus, we concur with the recommendation and will continue to expand our cross-training efforts.